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ACTION: SecState Washington _____ PRIORITY

From Bruce.

Deptel 2957.

There is nothing novel in fact that the majority of the British press
steadily insular and on certain
and other British information media are ~~commonly~~ subjects anti-American.

This attitude has been persistent and consistent for years.

- I. The subjects which most often inspire criticism are (1) Economic,
(2) Foreign policy.

Re
~~Regarding~~ the former the motivation is largely (a) jealousy of our
great wealth and power ~~which~~ while those of the UK have been steadily declining,
and (b) resentment of our often successful competition. (The last is best
illustrated in the area of weapons purchasing, where the British claim they
have lost important orders especially from West Germany because of undue
US Governmental pressures on behalf our own suppliers.)

Re
II. ~~Regarding~~ foreign policy, here again jealousy, reactions of
wounded pride, realization of the real deterioration in Britain's international
power position play part. They reflect a *unexpressed* public refusal to admit that the UK
is not a first class power, comparable in influence, if only the Government
would skilfully exercise its authority, to the US and USSR. This opinion is not,
of course, shared by realistic politicians, ~~and the better informed civilians~~
and military.

In addition, almost regardless of the standard of intelligence of those
who are articulate on such matters, there has long been a fear here that we
might use our nuclear capability unwisely and rashly, or else have to ~~submit~~
to it through escalation.

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III. It is against this background that British comments and actions, during the Cuban episode should be viewed. The postmortem referred to in Reftel is of no consequence; it merely illustrates again mutual national antagonisms over formulation and interpretation of foreign policies as viewed by purveyors of spot sensations. There are American journalists in London who feel that the British Government and publications denied us the support to which we were properly entitled at a time of great crisis. There are British journalists who were convinced, for a time, that the US objective was to invade Cuba.

As the result of what finally occurred, there has been much crow eaten during the past few weeks. Some of it has not yet been digested, particularly by those who have long memories over Suez.

IV. I am satisfied that USIS London was remarkably effective in explaining American policy at a period when the atmosphere was initially hostile. British press times and public opinion began shifting after the exceptional feat of USIS in placing the aerial photographs before newspapermen and later 24 million television viewers, on the critical night of October 23. (See USIS field message 35, October 29, for full account this episode. Incidentally, I think it might have been appropriate if some USG official had contradicted the entirely false, but harmful to US interests, article by David Wise in the Herald Tribune, stating that I had, on my own initiative, following pressure from the Prime Minister, released classified photograph without authorization from Washington. It is somewhat ironical that our

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Government's chosen emissary for London briefings never relaxed his personal clutch on his documents, nor quite properly would he have done so even if I had improperly suggested it, until Washington had given clearance).

IV. I have no reason whatever to believe that tension or distrust exists between this Embassy and Whitehall. On the contrary, relationships seem intimate and excellent. What is unknown to journalists in both countries was the frequency of private communications, during the Cuban crisis, between the Prime Minister and President Kennedy. I remain convinced that had it been necessary ultimately for us to have used force against Cuba we would have had the support of the British Government, despite the furious opposition of most of the press.

Michael Hadow, chief spokesman of the Foreign Office, deplored to PAC yesterday Harsch-Fromm efforts to create a story to satisfy their editors at home. No American officer here has voiced to the press corps any criticism of Foreign Office or Whitehall press guidance during the early days of the crisis. The alleged British criticism of the Embassy's handling of the press seems to be based on the misinterpretation of one remark by Hadow in his weekly briefing to selected American correspondents several weeks ago. Responding to correspondents' criticism of lack of British editorial support for US on Cuba, Hadow explained FonOff job is to explain HMG policy, but it is not FonOff responsibility to undertake to defend US policy, this being the job of US Embassy. Several US correspondents have distorted this statement into evidence of a controversy.

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I would advocate letting this petty controversy sink into the slough it merits. Anyhow, I think any vague London interest in it will be replaced, as of today, ~~with~~ by the engaging topic of Dean Acheson's speech last night at West Point.

BRUCE

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